

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE: Farm Viability Enhancement Program
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

RFR No. AGR-FVEP-07-13

Due Date: June 30, 2006

Contact: Craig Richov, Program Coordinator
Farm Viability Enhancement Program
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
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Boston, MA 02114-2151
617-626-1725

This Request for Response (RFR) contains three sections; Section I - Program Description, Section II - Application, Section III - Financial Statement. Those responding (Responders) must complete Sections II and III and return to the contact noted above by June 30, 2006 in order to be considered for participation in the program.

SECTION I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

(1) Purpose:

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“Agricultural Resources”) invites responses from Massachusetts’ farmers who wish to participate in the Farm Viability Enhancement Program. Farmers must be willing in Phase I, to commit sufficient time to properly participate in the business planning process, and, if they advance to Phase II, farmers must be willing to agree to implement agreed upon components of a viability plan, and to place their agricultural land under an Agricultural Covenant (Covenant). All awards pursuant to this Program are contingent upon legislative authorization and administrative appropriation.

The purpose of the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (“Program”) is to assist farmers in improving their economic viability and environmental integrity through the development and implementation of a Farm Viability Enhancement Plan (“Business Plan” or “Plan”). A comprehensive Business Plan is developed in Phase I by a team comprised of farmers and other agricultural, economic and environmental consultants engaged by Agricultural Resources. The Plan suggests ways for a farmer to increase on-farm income through such methods as improved management practices, diversification, direct marketing, value-added initiatives, and agro-tourism. In addition, the Plan may make recommendations concerning environmental and resource conservation measures on participating farms.

Farmers (except those enrolled in Agricultural Resources Agricultural Preservation Restriction (“APR”) Program), who develop Business Plans with Agricultural Resources in Phase I, are eligible to participate in Phase II of the Program upon a declaration of interest by the farmer and upon a favorable decision of Agricultural Resources. Phase II of the Program requires the execution of a new contract between Agricultural Resources and the farmer. The owner of the property is required to grant a Covenant to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a term of years. In exchange, Agricultural Resources provides the farmer with funding to implement specific portions of the Plan. Participation in Phase II is based, in part, on the financial needs of the Participant and/or the Plan’s

ability to improve the economic viability and environmental integrity of the agricultural operation. **The entire farm must be included in the Covenant.**

The earliest possible payment under Phase II of the Program is January 15, 2007. The schedule is as follows: Review of responses to this RFR July 1 through September 11, 2006. Pending the availability of funds, notification of acceptance into Phase I –September 15, 2006. Orientation for farmers that are accepted into the Program will be during late September 2006. The Plans will be developed between October 1, 2006 and March 31, 2007 (Phase I). Executing documents in preparation of payment in Phase II then takes approximately four to six weeks from the time the Plan is accepted. During this time a contract, Covenant and other required documents are prepared and executed. Depending on the availability of funds, Agricultural Resources approval of contracts and release of funds is expected to take place between January 2007 and June 2007. **Costs incurred prior to contract and execution of Covenant in Phase II cannot be reimbursed and will not qualify as Program expenditures.** Should additional funds become available, Agricultural Resources may select other Responders, not initially chosen for participation, to participate in the Program at any time during Fiscal Year 2007.

(2) Contract and Performance Specifications:

A. Eligibility

To be eligible for participation in the Program, a Responder must own, or be a Co-Responder with the owner of, at least 5 acres of land, which must be in active agricultural use and managed as a commercial enterprise by the Responder for at least the three previous years.

Acreage already restricted by an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) or similar encumbrances cannot be used to qualify for Phase II. APR farms or other encumbered lands are eligible only for Phase I (business planning services). Non-restricted acreage, owned by an APR owner or owners of similarly encumbered lands, can be used to qualify for Phase II. Such acreage could be placed under a Covenant and could be eligible for funding in the Program.

Farms that have previously participated in the Farm Viability Enhancement Program are eligible to apply if the 5-year or 10-year Covenant has already expired, or the farm was placed under a Covenant prior to July 1, 2000.

Cranberry farms, that in the past were able to apply to the Cranberry Viability Program, may now apply to the Farm Viability Enhancement Program through this RFR. To be eligible, cranberry operators must own, or be a co-applicant with the owner of a minimum of twenty acres total, with at least 3 acres of cranberry bogs currently in production and at least 10 acres of non-wetland (upland). Responders must have; an NRCS Farm Conservation Plan dated no earlier than 2000, or be actively involved in a planning process with the County Conservation District and prior to responding to this RFR have signed a Co-operator's Agreement with the District showing an intent to complete an up-to-date Conservation Plan. The acreage as defined in the Farm Conservation Plan will govern farm eligibility. In order for a Responder to qualify for a \$60,000 contract, a cranberry farm must have a ratio of

non-wetland (upland) to bog of 3:1 with a minimum of 34 acres of active cranberry bogs. In order for a Responder to qualify for a \$40,000 contract, a cranberry farm must have a ratio of non-wetland (upland) to bog of 3:1 with a minimum of 10 acres of active cranberry bogs. In order a Responder to qualify for a \$20,000 contract, a cranberry farm must have a minimum of 3 acres in active cranberry bogs and a minimum of twenty acres total. Responders must submit a copy of their Farm Conservation Plan or their Co-operator's Agreement with their application.

Non-profit organizations are ineligible for this Program.

B. Criteria for Selection in Phase I

Applications will be evaluated and selected based on the following criteria. They are listed in order of importance.

- (1) Degree of threat to the continuation of the agricultural activity. A threat can include, but is not limited to, financial instability, urban encroachment, market forces, or management changes that may negatively impact continuing agricultural activity.
- (2) Number of acres of land to be protected by the Covenant. Higher acreage is more competitive. Intensity of use on the land, and its significance and contribution to the state's agricultural industry will be considered.
- (3) Number of years and type of agricultural experience and training of Responders, and their willingness to explore improved management and efficiency methods. Identification of problems, and examples of opportunities for growth or possible solution paths for farm viability are contained in the application.
- (4) Degree to which the project would accomplish environmental objectives, such as the protection or conservation of water resources. Those responses that rate the need for an environmental assessment as 'High' will be more competitive in the review process.
- (5) Whether the agricultural operation has diversified into retail or value-added activities or there are plans to diversify into retail and value-added activities.
- (6) The suitability and productivity of the land for agricultural use based on its current or historic use, physical features, and location.
- (7) Other unique factors that tend to support eligibility such as historical, open space, or aesthetic amenities, and providing farm employment.

C. Funding For Plan Implementation – Phase II

Once a Business Plan has been developed and approved by Agricultural Resources at the completion of Phase I, funding for Plan implementation may be available. Funding from the Program is optional and awards may be

rescinded at anytime during the technical assistance and business plan development phase. Both the farmer and Agricultural Resources must agree upon which selected elements from the Business Plan will be implemented prior to proceeding on to Phase II. Depending on the availability of funding, Agricultural Resources may offer the Participants one of three funding options. Participants must agree to all the conditions contained in either (1), (2) or (3) below:

- (1) In exchange for up to Twenty Thousand (\$20,000) Dollars, the Participants will agree to (a) Grant the Commonwealth a five (5) year Covenant; and (b) Implement agreed upon components of the Business Plan.
- (2) In exchange for up to Forty Thousand (\$40,000) Dollars, the Participants will agree to (a) Grant the Commonwealth a ten (10) year Covenant; and (b) Implement agreed upon components of the Business Plan.
- (3) In exchange for up to Sixty Thousand (\$60,000) Dollars, the Participants will agree to (a) Grant the Commonwealth a ten (10) year Covenant; and (b) Implement agreed upon components of the Business Plan. To be eligible for consideration under option (3), the Participants must place a minimum of 135 acres under the ten (10) year Covenant. In addition, the Business Plan developed in Phase I must demonstrate the potential to improve net farm income, and show an increase in farm employment or retention of farm jobs.

C-1 Additional Funds for Plan Implementation – Phase II

Under certain circumstances, the Farm Viability Enhancement Program may award additional funds beyond that provided for in either (C)(2) or (C)(3) above. Some implementation strategies recommended in the Plan of participating farms may project a substantial economic development impact to the farm, a commodity group, or an agricultural area. Participant farms showing such opportunities may receive an award up to \$50,000 instead of the maximum \$40,000 award in (C)(2) above; or may receive up to \$75,000 instead of the maximum \$60,000 award in (C)(3) above.

Participant farms must meet the following objectives and criteria in order to qualify for additional funds:

- (1) Agricultural Significance – Does the farm business currently have an annual gross income at least equal to the award amount (\$50,000 or \$75,000)? Does the Farm Viability Plan forecast an annual gross income from farm operations in excess of twice the award amount (\$100,000 or \$150,000)?
- (2) Sharing Risk – Does the Plan of the Participant farm show the farm operator's investment in additional capital to the total implementation cost, that is at least one half the amount of the award amount (at least \$25,000 or \$37,500)?

- (3) Impact on Industry – Does the Plan of the Participant farm create an opportunity, or help solve a problem, that will have an impact on other farm operations? Is this impact significant to the States’ agricultural industry?
- (4) Farmer Commitment – Does the Plan of the Participant farm address the long term viability of the farm including a succession plan for long term management and ownership. The Plan of the Participant farm must show an intensity of use on the farm that is substantial enough so that it encourages ongoing use of the resource.
- (5) Success Stories –Following implementation of Farm Viability Plan strategies, operators of participating farms must be willing to share their experiences, which may benefit other farm operators, with Agricultural Resources at sponsored farmer meetings, tours, or press events. Participants must be willing to release financial data to Agricultural Resources that demonstrates the success of their farm business. Agricultural Resources will strive to keep all such financial data confidential.

Responders will be informed which option the Department intends to offer when notified of acceptance into Phase I. However, a final determination will be made at the completion of Phase I. Determination of which option is offered to a Responder rests solely with Agricultural Resources.

D. Reporting and Documentation (Phase III)

- (1) Program Participants must provide Agricultural Resources with all the records and receipts of the expenditures made with the funds received at a date specified in the contract.
- (2) In order to evaluate the impact of the Program and upon request from Agricultural Resources, Participants must submit information and financial data pertaining to their farming operation to Agricultural Resources for a period of up to five years following the termination date specified on the contract. All such financial data shall be considered confidential.

(3) Instructions for Submission of Responses

Anyone interested in submitting a response to this Request for Response must submit the completed **Section II - Application** and a completed **Section III - Financial Statement**.

In addition to Section II and Section III, a Responder must submit (1) a USGS topographic map and (2) an aerial photo, with the farm property bounds outlined on each. Topographic maps and aerial photos are available on line at <http://terraserver.homeadvisor.msn.com/default.aspx>, or can be prepared by your USDA-NRCS field office once Responders provide them with an outline of your farm’s boundaries. Maps and photos provided by USDA-NRCS are a free service to farmers. Responders should plan on contacting NRCS in April or May as it may take several weeks before you receive

these materials. If you already have an up-to-date NRCS Farm Conservation Plan, you can submit copies of maps and aerial photos from the plan.

A. Application Evaluation

A staff review team (“Review Team”) will consider all complete responses and rank them according to the stated criteria. The Review Team will be comprised of Agricultural Resources staff and Program consultants. Their ranking and recommendations will be conveyed to an Advisory Committee of up to 15 members, appointed by Agricultural Resources, that are representative of a cross-section of the business and agricultural sectors, including employees of Agricultural Resources. The Advisory Committee will consider the rankings and then convey recommendations to the Commissioner of Agricultural Resources for final decisions. Agricultural Resources will make notifications of acceptance and rejection to applicants, in writing. A Responder can withdraw a response at any point. Agricultural Resources reserves the right to consider geographic distribution of awards and/or agricultural diversity as additional criterion. All acceptances will be conditional upon the availability of funding.

B. Deadline For Responses

Responses (Section II and Section III) with ALL requested supporting documents, noted in Section III, 5., must be received no later than 12:00 noon, June 30, 2006 at the following address: Craig Richov, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114-2151. **Electronic copies and Facsimiles will not be accepted.**

(4) RFR Attachments:

A. At the beginning of Phase II, a Participant must be willing to execute a Covenant, a sample of which is available upon request.

B. Any Participant (also called a Contractor or Bidder on the attachment forms) who is accepted for participation in Phase II of the Program must complete the following:

1. Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. If the Bidder already has executed and filed the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, please indicate this in your Response. The Commonwealth Terms and Conditions shall be incorporated by reference into any Contract for Commodities and Services executed pursuant to this RFR. A Bidder is required to execute the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions only once.
2. Verification of Taxation Reporting Information (W-9) Form.
3. Commonwealth Standard Contract.
4. Northern Ireland Notice and Certification.
5. Electronic Funds Transfer Form (EFT). (Optional)
6. Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
7. Affirmative Action Commitment Statement
8. Affirmative Market Program Plan form.
9. Scope of Services and Budget
10. Consultant Contractor Mandatory Submission Form

11. Property Description Form* (accompanied by a copy of the deed(s) for your farm property that will be placed under the Agricultural Covenant)
12. An executed recordable Agricultural Covenant*

**Please consult the program director to request a sample of items 11 and 12. Attachments are available at <http://www.mass.gov/osd>*

It is not necessary to complete any of the above forms as part of the response to this RFR. Once a Responder has been selected to be a Participant in the Program, Agricultural Resources will provide a copy of these Attachments to the Participant for completion and execution in the contract approval process.

(5) Notice to Responders:

A. This RFR is distributed electronically using the Comm-PASS system. It is the responsibility of every Responder to check Comm-PASS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Responders who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect Responses. Potential Responders are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure that they have the most recent RFR files. Comm-Pass is available on line at <http://www.Comm-PASS.com>. For those utilizing the Comm-PASS system, the RFR attachments listed herein are available on line on the "Forms Page" of the Operational Services Division web site (www.mass.gov/osd).

B. Responders may not alter the RFR language or any RFR component files. Responders must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections, which prompt the Responder for Response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms, and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized modifications will disqualify a Response.

(6) Contract Type: Maximum Obligation

(7) Acquisition Methods: Purchase\Fee for Service

(8) Number Of Vendors Required (Single or Multiple): Multiple

(9) Single or Multiple Department Users: Single

(10) Anticipated Contract Duration: Through December 31, 2007, with 1 (one) 1 year option to renew.

(11) Anticipated Expenditures, Funding or Compensation: Maximum of \$75,000 per Program Participant.

(12) RESERVES:

This RFR is an open enrollment solicitation, which means the Department of Agricultural Resources reserves the right to re-open this solicitation and add new contractors at any time during the life of this contract (which includes any options to renew). Open enrollment solicitation will have a defined open period during which a bidder may submit a response.

This solicitation may be re-open for the following reasons;

1. For special projects that are compelling and that happen "out of cycle" for the program. Special projects may be very large tracks of land, individual emergencies or disasters, or special opportunities for agricultural development to an industry or region. Out of cycle projects will be subject to the same

review of staff, will be required to meet all thresholds of the Farm Viability Enhancement Program, and will be subject to the same approval of the Commissioner.

2. Increased Funding.

3. Changing needs of the department.

(12) RFR required Specifications

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the Standard Contract Form and the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions (either version). However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00:

The terms of 801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services (and 808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR. No electronic responses may be submitted in response to this RFR.

Affirmative Market Program AMP. Massachusetts Executive Order 390 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and resulted in the Affirmative Market Program in Public Contracting. As a result, M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, subcontractors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships.

Non-certified bidders are strongly encouraged to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder's participation of AMP objectives, the Affirmative Market Program Plan for large procurements greater than \$50,000 must be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an AMP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor's performance, and use actual expenditures with SOMWBA certified contractors to fulfill their own AMP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size, however, submission of an AMP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$50,000.

Agencies may require some or all of the following components as part of the Affirmative Market Program Plan submitted by bidders: Sub-contracting with certified M/WBE firms, Growth and Development activities to increase M/WBE capacity, Ancillary use of certified M/WBE firms, Past Performance or information of past expenditures with certified M/WBEs. Agencies are encouraged to include additional incentives for bidders to commit to at least one certified MBE and WBE in the submission of AMP plans.

A Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), M/Non-Profit, or W/Non-Profit, is defined as such by SOMWBA. All certified businesses are required to submit an up to date copy of their State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) certification letter. The purpose for this certification is to participate in the Commonwealth's Affirmative Market Program for public contracting. Minority- and Women-Owned firms that are not currently certified but would like to be considered as an M/WBE for the purpose of this RFR should submit their application at least two weeks prior to the RFR closing date. For further information on SOMWBA certification, contact their office at 1-617-727-8692 or via the Internet at mass.gov/somwba.

Affirmative Market Program Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the agency is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Agencies may define required deliverables including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing compliance of subcontracting commitments made in a bidder's Affirmative Market Program (AMP) Plan. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The PMT may select the response(s), which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The PMT and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS. If this RFR has been distributed electronically using the Comm-PASS system, RFR attachments that are referenced are available either as separate pdf files with this RFR or on the [OSD forms](http://mass.gov/osd) page (mass.gov/osd). Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining and completing the required attachments that are identified in this RFR and for checking Comm-PASS for any addenda or modifications that are subsequently made to this RFR or attachments. The Commonwealth and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodation to bidders who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Bidders are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure that they have the most recent RFR files. Bidders may not alter (manually or electronically) the RFR language or any RFR component files. Modifications to the body of the RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited and may disqualify a response.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs, which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors are able to track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. EFT applications can be found on [OSD forms](http://mass.gov/osd) page (mass.gov/osd). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](http://mass.gov/osc) site (mass.gov/osc: click on MASSfinance).

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form to this department for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form contains banking information, this form, and any information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The PMT will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the bidder.

Pursuant to Section 11. Indemnification of the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, the term "other damages" shall include, but shall not be limited to, the reasonable costs the Commonwealth incurs to repair, return, replace or seek cover (purchase of comparable substitute commodities and services) under a contract. "Other damages" shall not include damages to the Commonwealth as a result of third party claims, provided, however, that the foregoing in no way limits the Commonwealth's right of recovery for personal injury or property damages or patent and copyright infringement under Section 11 nor the Commonwealth's ability to join the contractor as a third party defendant. Further, the term "other damages" shall not include, and in no event shall the Contractor be liable for, damages for the Commonwealth's

use of contractor provided products or services, loss of Commonwealth records, or data (or other intangible property), loss of use of equipment, lost revenue, lost savings or lost profits of the Commonwealth. In no event shall "other damages" exceed the greater of \$100,000, or two times the value of the product or service (as defined in the contract scope of work) that is the subject of the claim. Section 11 sets forth the contractor's entire liability under a contract. Nothing in this section shall limit the Commonwealth's ability to negotiate higher limitations of liability in a particular contract, provided that any such limitation must specifically reference Section 11 of the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions.

Northern Ireland Notice and Certification. All bidders must complete the Northern Ireland Notice and Certification form to satisfy M.G.L. c.7 section 22C, which states that no state agency may procure commodities or services from any bidder employing ten (10) or more employees in an office or other facility located in Northern Ireland unless the bidder certifies through the notice and certification form that if it employs ten or more employees in Northern Ireland, a) the bidder does not discriminate in employment, compensation or the terms, conditions and privileges of employment on account of religious or political belief, b) the bidder promotes religious tolerance within the workplace and the eradication of any manifestations of religious and other illegal discrimination and, c) the bidder is not engaged in the manufacture, distribution or sale of firearms, munitions, including rubber or plastic bullets, tear gas, armored vehicles or military aircraft for use or deployment in any activity in Northern Ireland.

Pricing: Federal Government Services Administration (GSA) or Veteran's Administration Supply. The Commonwealth reserves the right to request from the successful bidder(s) initial pricing schedules and periodic updates available under their GSA or other federal pricing contracts. In the absence of proprietary information being part of such contracts, compliance for submission of requested pricing information is expected within 30 days of any request. If the contractor receives a GSA or Veteran's Administration Supply contract at any time during this contract period, it must notify the Commonwealth contract manager.

Pricing: Price Limitation. The bidder must agree that no other customer of similar size and similar terms and conditions shall receive a lower price for the same commodity and service during the contract period, unless this same lower price is immediately effective for the Commonwealth. The bidder must also agree to provide current or historical pricing offered or negotiated with other governmental or private entities at any time during the contract period upon the request of the contract manager.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., Chapter 66, Section 10, and to Chapter 4, Section 7, Subsection 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The PMT reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

The Department of Agricultural Resources is an Affirmation Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Women, Minorities, Veterans and Handicapped persons are encouraged to apply. This RFR is available in alternative formats upon request.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE – AGR-FVEP 07-13

**MASACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
Farm Viability Enhancement Program**

Section II - APPLICATION

It is important that you read the Section I entitled Program Description before completing this Section II entitled Application. Key information is contained in Section I. In this Section, special instructions are in bold and Italics. Please read carefully and respond to each question carefully.

Please type or print clearly in ballpoint pen.

Date _____

Municipality	Date received (official use only)
County	Received by:(official use only)

1. Applicant(s)

Name:		
Mailing Address:		
Town:	Zip:	E-Mail:
Home Phone:	Other Phone:	

2a. Farm location if different from above

Address:	Town:	Zip:
Phone:		
Name of person in residence:		

2b. Owner(s) of record if different from applicant(s):

1. Name:	2. Name:
Address:	Address:
Phone:	Phone:

Is this a Trust or Corporation? Yes _____ No _____

2c. Farm name, Corporate, Trust or Business name, if any.

3. What are the primary farm businesses and/or crops currently on the farm? Check all that apply.

Dairy	Vegetable	Orchard	Nursery	Greenhouse	Value-added
Forest products	Maple	Other livestock	Other: specify		
Is there a retail/value-added operation? Yes No			Explain		
Are you planning to go into retail or value adding? Yes No			Explain		

Describe in the table below what agricultural activities are carried out on the farm. List acreage by activity.

Activity (vegetables, dairy, crops grown, etc.)	Number of livestock, acres, or quantity of product devoted to the activity

4. How many acres will be included in the agricultural use Covenant? _____ Acres. Copies of deeds for these acres are not needed for your response. Selected Responders will have to provide a copy of deed(s) to Agricultural Resources during Phase I of the Program.

How many acres do you farm in total (please include rented land and/or APR land)? _____ Acres

Agricultural Resources needs details on the total acreage of the farm that will be included in the Business Plan. Provide an approximate outline of the property on a United States Geological Survey topographical map. On the map, please draw outlines showing the following and label a, and b:

(a.) What do you own? Include all parcels even if each parcel is not contiguous.

(b.) Do you rent land from other people that you want included in the Business Plan?

Yes_____ No_____ How many acres? _____ **Please note: rented acreage is not eligible for restriction.**

Please note: Larger amounts of acreage proposed for restriction is more competitive in the review process.

Please complete this land table

LAND TYPE OR USAGE	TOTAL acreage by use	Acres owned -by use	Acres rented- by use
Example: Tillable cropland	100	70	30
A. Tillable cropland			
B. Non-tillable cropland			
C. Nursery – Orchard – Cranberry Bog			
D. Pasture			
E. Managed woodland			
F. Non-managed woodland			
G. Ponds, wetlands			
H. Land occupied by farm buildings			
I. Land occupied by commercial buildings or residences			

If you rent land **to** others, indicate # of acres _____ and usage _____ (Choose one of the categories in table above.)

6. Is your land under Farmland Assessment (Chapter 61A) or Forest (Chapter 61) or Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)?

61A Yes No	61 Yes No	APR Yes No
# of acres	# of acres	# of acres

7. Excluding existing residences, approximately how many feet of road frontage does the farm property have? _____

Is municipal sewer available at the farm property? Yes _____ No _____
 If no, what is the likelihood that existing soils will support septic systems? High ____ Med. ____ Low ____
 How would you describe recent development (new construction) in your immediate neighborhood?
 Heavy ____ Moderate ____ Light ____

8. How many people earn fulltime income(s) from the farm? _____

Of these, how many are immediate family (children, spouses, siblings) _____

How many people are employed part time? _____ Of these, how many are immediate family? _____

How many seasonal employees are hired? _____ For what months? _____

Who are the current managers on the farm and what are their roles? _____

Who are the managers expected to be on the farm at the conclusion of the covenant term? _____

9. All Plans include an environmental assessment and suggest options for actions that can be taken to improve environmental viability. How high would you rate the importance of an environmental assessment at your farm? High _____ Moderate _____ Low _____ Check any of the following that apply.

Erosion & sediment control	Water Management (wells, rivers)
Nutrient & manure management	Pesticide management
Facility wastewater and runoff control	Other (describe)

How many feet of frontage does your farm have along a river, pond, or lake? _____

All landowners of record and those who will receive the grant award must sign this application. Substitutes or signatures initialed by another person will not be accepted. Applicants who are not owners of the land to be restricted must have all owners sign this Section II – Application otherwise Agricultural Resources will not process it.

Signature Date _____

Signature Date _____

Signature Date _____

Request for Response AGR-FVEP 07-13
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES
Farm Viability Enhancement Program

SECTION III - FINANCIAL STATEMENT

It is important that you read Section I entitled Program Description before completing this Financial Statement. Key information is contained there. In the Financial Statement below, special instructions are in bold and Italics. Please read carefully. This section is to be completed by the farm operator(s). ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED.

1. List any liens or encumbrances, and the amounts, on the farm as described in the Application – Section II.

Encumbrance (to whom is the money owed)	Amount owed

Do any of these include a lien on your residence, or a mortgage on the property including your home?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Check here if there is no debt associated with the farm.

2. To complete this section, applicants should use their 2003, 2004 and 2005 Schedules F or 1120S or 1120C forms. Copies of these records are not needed by Agricultural Resources at this time, but will have to be presented to representatives of Agricultural Resources during Phase I of the Program.

Please complete the following summary. If taxes for 2005 are not completed, estimate gross and net income.

Tax Year	Gross Farm Income	Net Farm Income	Off Farm Income
2003			
2004			
2005			

3. Please include off-farm income/jobs that immediate family members have.

Relationship	Name	Off-farm income that contributes to family
Operator		\$ estimated annual
Partner/Spouse		\$ estimated annual
Other		\$ estimated annual

4a. The Program's goal is to provide farmers with a plan of action to make their farms more viable. Agricultural Resources wants to know what challenges and opportunities you see for your operation. Some examples include 1) regulations that must be met, 2) development pressures, 3) need to expand, 4) succession issues, 5) moving from wholesale to retail, 6) debt, and/or not making enough money, 7) environmental concerns. ***Please note: this is the most important consideration in reviewing applications. Be thorough in explaining your circumstances.*** The following information is critical. Extra sheets of paper may be attached.

4b. What do you think should be done to improve the economic viability and/or the environmental condition of your farm?

4c. Do you live solely off the farm income now? Yes ____ No ____

Describe your short and long term plans for keeping the land in agricultural use.

4d. How many years of agricultural experience does the farm manager have? ____ years.

4e. Has the manager completed Agricultural Resources' Entrepreneurial Business Training Program? Yes ____ No ____ List any other business or management training: _____

5. The following **MUST** be included with your application:

- USGS topographical map with your property location outlined as indicated.
- Aerial photograph with your farm property outlined
- Farm Conservation Plan or Co-operator's Agreement (requirement for Cranberry farmers only)

By signing below, you are authorizing Agricultural Resources to conduct a field inspection of the land to be considered for inclusion in the Covenant. In addition, those signing below are expressing a willingness to execute an Agricultural Covenant. All farm operators must sign Section III. Substitutes or signatures initialed by another person will not be accepted.

Signature Date _____

Signature Date _____

Signature Date _____

Send to: Craig Richov
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114-2151

The deadline is (12:00 noon) Friday, June 30, 2006.